

HOMOLOGY AND MODULAR CLASSES OF LIE ALGEBROIDS

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ABSTRACT. For a Lie algebroid, divergences chosen in a classical way lead to a uniquely defined homology theory. They define also, in a natural way, modular classes of certain Lie algebroid morphisms. This approach, applied for the anchor map, recovers the concept of modular class due to S. Evens, J.-H. Lu, and A. Weinstein.

1. INTRODUCTION

Homology of a Lie algebroid structure on a vector bundle E over M are usually considered as homology of the corresponding Batalin-Vilkovisky algebra associated with a chosen generating operator ∂ for the Schouten-Nijenhuis bracket on multi-sections of E . The generating operators that are homology operators, i.e. $\partial^2 = 0$, can be identified with flat E -connections on $\bigwedge^{\text{top}} E$ (see [17]) or divergence operators (flat right E -connections on $M \times \mathbb{R}$, see [8]). The problem is that the homology group depends on the choice of the generating operator (flat connection, divergence) and no one seems to be privileged. For instance, if a Lie algebroid on T^*M associated with a Poisson tensor P on M is concerned, then the traditional Poisson homology is defined in terms of the Koszul-Brylinski homology operator $\partial_P = [d, i_P]$. However, the Poisson homology groups may differ from the homology groups obtained by means of 1-densities on M . The celebrated modular class of the Poisson structure [18] measures this difference. Analogous statement is valid for triangular Lie bialgebroids [11].

The concept of a Lie algebroid divergence, so a generating operator, associated with a ‘volume form’, i.e. nowhere-vanishing section of $\bigwedge^{\text{top}} E^*$, is completely classical (see [11], [17]). Less-known seems to be the fact that we can use ‘odd-forms’ instead of forms (cf. [2]) with same formulas for divergence and that such nowhere-vanishing volume odd-forms always exist. The point is that the homology groups obtained in this way are all isomorphic, independently on the choice of the volume odd-form. This makes the homology of a Lie algebroid a well-defined notion. From this point of view the Poisson homology is not the homology of the associated Lie algebroid T^*M but a deformed version of the latter, exactly as the exterior differential $d^\phi \mu = d\mu + \phi \wedge \mu$ of Witten [19] is a deformation of the standard de Rham differential.

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In this language, the modular class of a Lie algebroid morphism $\kappa : E_1 \rightarrow E_2$ covering the identity on M is defined as the class of the difference between the pull-back of a divergence on E_2 and a divergence on E_1 , both associated with volume odd-forms. In the case when $\kappa : E \rightarrow TM$ is the anchor map, we recognize the standard modular class of a Lie algebroid [3] but it is clear that other (canonical) morphisms will lead to other (canonical) modular classes.

2. DIVERGENCES AND GENERATING OPERATORS

2.1. Lie algebroids and their cohomology. Let $\tau : E \rightarrow M$ be a vector bundle. Let $\mathcal{A}^i(E) = \text{Sec}(\bigwedge^i E)$ for $i = 0, 1, 2, \dots$, let $\mathcal{A}^i(E) = \{0\}$ for $i < 0$, and denote by $\mathcal{A}(E) = \bigoplus_{i \in \mathbb{Z}} \mathcal{A}^i(E)$ the Grassmann algebra of multisections of E . It is a graded commutative associative algebra with respect to the wedge product.

There are different ways to define a Lie algebroid structure on E . We prefer to see it as a linear graded Poisson structure on $\mathcal{A}(E)$ (see [7]), i.e., a graded bilinear operation $[\ , \]$ on $\mathcal{A}(E)$ of degree -1 with the following properties:

- (a) Graded anticommutativity: $[a, b] = -(-1)^{(|a|-1)(|b|-1)}[b, a]$.
- (b) The graded Jacobi identity: $[a, [b, c]] = [[a, b], c] + (-1)^{(|a|-1)(|b|-1)}[b, [a, c]]$.
- (c) The graded Leibniz rule: $[a, b \wedge c] = [a, b] \wedge c + (-1)^{(|a|-1)|b|}b \wedge [a, c]$.

This bracket is just the Schouten bracket associated with the standard Lie algebroid bracket on sections of E . It is well known that such brackets are in bijective correspondence with de Rham differentials d on the Grassmann algebra $\mathcal{A}(E^*)$ of multisections of the dual bundle E^* which are described by the formula

$$(1) \quad d\mu(X_0, \dots, X_n) = \sum_i (-1)^i [X_i, \mu(X_0, \dots, \hat{i}, \dots, X_n)] + \sum_{k < l} (-1)^{k+l} \mu([X_k, X_l], X_0, \dots, \hat{k}, \dots, \hat{l}, \dots, X_n)$$

where the X_i are sections of E . We will refer to elements of $\mathcal{A}(E^*)$ as *forms*. Since d is a derivation on $\mathcal{A}(E^*)$ of degree 1 with $d^2 = 0$, it defines the corresponding de Rham cohomology $H^*(E, d)$ of the Lie algebroid in the obvious way.

2.2. Generating operators and divergences. The definition of the homology of a Lie algebroid is more delicate than that of cohomology. The standard approach is via generating operators for the Schouten bracket $[\ , \]$. By this we mean an operator ∂ of degree -1 on $\mathcal{A}(E)$ which satisfies

$$(2) \quad [a, b] = (-1)^{|a|}(\partial(a \wedge b) - \partial(a) \wedge b - (-1)^{|a|}a \wedge \partial(b)).$$

The idea of a generating operator goes back to the work by Koszul [14]. A generating operator which is a homology operator, i.e. $\partial^2 = 0$, gives rise to the so called Batalin-Vilkovisky algebra. Remark that the leading sign $(-1)^{|a|}$ serves to produce graded antisymmetry with respects to the degrees shifted by -1 out of graded symmetry. One could equally well use $(-1)^{|b|}$ instead of $(-1)^{|a|}$, or one could use the obstruction for ∂ to be a graded right derivation in the parentheses instead of a graded left one as we did. We shall stick to the standard conventions.

It is clear from (2) and from the properties of the Schouten bracket that ∂ is then a second order differential operator on the graded commutative associative

algebra $\mathcal{A}(E)$ which is completely determined by its restriction to $\text{Sec}(E)$. In fact, it is easy to see (cf. [8]) that

$$(3) \quad \partial(X_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge X_n) = \sum_i (-1)^{i+1} \partial(X_i) X_1 \wedge \cdots \hat{i} \cdots \wedge X_n + \\ + \sum_{k < l} (-1)^{k+l} [X_k, X_l] \wedge X_1 \wedge \cdots \hat{k} \cdots \hat{l} \cdots \wedge X_n$$

for $X_1, \dots, X_n \in \text{Sec}(E)$, which looks completely dual to (1). From (2) we get the following property of ∂ :

$$(4) \quad -\partial(fX) = -f\partial(X) + [X, f] \quad \text{for } X \in \text{Sec}(E), f \in C^\infty(M).$$

Since $[X, f] = \rho(X)(f)$ where $\rho : E \rightarrow TM$ is the anchor map of the Lie algebroid structure on E , the operator $-\partial$ has the algebraic property of a divergence. Conversely, (3) defines a generating operator for $[\cdot, \cdot]$ if only (4) is satisfied. i.e., generating operators can be identified with divergences. We may express this by $\text{div} \leftrightarrow \partial_{\text{div}}$. But a true divergence $\text{div} : \text{Sec}(E) \rightarrow C^\infty(M)$ satisfies besides (4) a cocycle condition

$$(5) \quad \text{div}([X, Y]) = [\text{div}(X), Y] + [X, \text{div}(Y)], \quad X, Y \in \text{Sec}(E),$$

which is equivalent (see [8]) to the fact that the corresponding generating operator ∂_{div} is a homology operator: $(\partial_{\text{div}})^2 = 0$. Note that divergences can be used in construction of generating operators also in the supersymmetric case (cf. [13]).

From now on we will fix the Lie algebroid structure on E , and we will denote by $\text{Gen}(E)$ the set of generating operators for $[\cdot, \cdot]$ which are homology operators, and by $\text{Div}(E)$ the canonically isomorphic (by (3)) set of divergences for the Lie algebroid satisfying (4) and (5). The problem is that there does not exist a canonical divergence, thus no canonical generating operator.

The set $\text{Div}(E)$ can be identified with the set of all flat E -connections on $\bigwedge^{\text{top}} E^*$, i.e., operators $\nabla : \text{Sec}(E) \times \text{Sec}(\bigwedge^{\text{top}}(E^*)) \rightarrow \text{Sec}(\bigwedge^{\text{top}}(E^*))$ which satisfy

- (i) $\nabla_{fX}\mu = f\nabla_X\mu$,
- (ii) $\nabla_X(f\mu) = f\nabla_X\mu + \rho(X)(f)\mu$,
- (iii) $[\nabla_X, \nabla_Y] = \nabla_{[X, Y]}$.

The identification is via

$$(6) \quad \mathcal{L}_X\mu - \nabla_X\mu = \text{div}(X)\mu$$

(cf. [11, (50)]), where $\mathcal{L}_X = di_X + i_X d$ is the Lie derivative. Note that (6) is independent of the choice of the section $\mu \in \text{Sec}(\bigwedge^{\text{top}}(E^*))$. We can use $\bigwedge^{\text{top}}(E)$ instead of $\bigwedge^{\text{top}}(E^*)$ and get the identification of $\text{Div}(E)$ with the set of flat E -connection on $\bigwedge^{\text{top}}(E)$ by (see [17])

$$(7) \quad \mathcal{L}_X\Lambda - \nabla_X\Lambda = \text{div}(X)\Lambda.$$

Of course, additional structures on E as, e.g., a Riemannian metric (smoothly arranged scalar products on fibers of E), may furnish a distinguished divergence on E . Fixing a metric we can distinguish a canonical torsionfree connection ∇ on E - the Levi-Civita connection for the Lie algebroid - in the standard way. It satisfies the standard Bianchi and Ricci identities (see [16]) and induces a connection on $\bigwedge^{\text{top}}(E)$ for which the generating operator ∂_∇ has the local form (see [17])

$\partial_\nabla(a) = -\sum_k i(\alpha^k)\nabla_{X_k}a$ where the X_k and α^k are dual local frames for E and E^* , respectively. Since

$$\partial_\nabla^2 = \sum_{k,j} i(\alpha^j)\nabla_{X_j}i(\alpha^k)\nabla_{X_k} = \sum_{k,j} i(\alpha^j)i(\alpha^k)(\nabla_{X_j}\nabla_{X_k} - \nabla_{\nabla_{X_j}X_k}),$$

$\partial^2 = 0$ is equivalent to

$$(8) \quad \sum_{j,k} i(\alpha^j)i(\alpha^k)R(X_j, X_k) = 0,$$

where R is the curvature tensor of ∇ . For a Levi-Civita connection ∇ the generating operator ∂_∇ is really a homology operator due to the following lemma.

Lemma 2.3. *A torsionfree connection ∇ on E satisfies simultaneously the Bianchi and the Ricci identity if and only if (8) holds for dual local frames X_k and α^k of E and E^* , respectively.*

Proof. (8) is equivalent to $\sum_{j,k} R(X_j, X_k)^*(\alpha^k \wedge \alpha^j \wedge \omega) = 0$ for all forms ω . It suffices to check this for ω a function or a 1-form due to the derivation property of contractions. For ω a function f we have

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{j,k} R(X_j, X_k)^*(f\alpha^k \wedge \alpha^j) &= \sum_{j,k} f \left(R(X_j, X_k)^*(\alpha^k) \wedge \alpha^j + \alpha^k \wedge R(X_j, X_k)^*(\alpha^j) \right) \\ &= 2f \sum_{s,j,k} R_{jks}^k \alpha^s \wedge \alpha^j \end{aligned}$$

and this vanishes for all f if and only if R_{jks}^k is symmetric in (j, s) , i.e., if the Ricci identity holds. For ω a 1-form, say α^i , we have

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{j,k} R(X_j, X_k)^*(\alpha^k \wedge \alpha^j \wedge \alpha^i) &= \\ &= \sum_{j,k} \left(R(X_j, X_k)^*(\alpha^k \wedge \alpha^j) \wedge \alpha^i + \alpha^k \wedge \alpha^j \wedge R(X_j, X_k)^*(\alpha^i) \right) = \\ &= 0 + \sum_{j,k,s} R_{jks}^i \alpha^k \wedge \alpha^j \wedge \alpha^s \end{aligned}$$

and this vanishes for all i if and only if $\sum_{\text{cycl}(j,k,s)} R_{jks}^i = 0$, i.e., if the first Bianchi identity holds. \square

Corollary 2.4. *Any Levi-Civita connection for a Riemannian metric on a Lie algebroid E induces a flat connection on $\bigwedge^{\text{top}} E$, thus also on $\bigwedge^{\text{top}} E^*$.* \square

3. HOMOLOGY OF THE LIE ALGEBROID

3.1. Getting divergences from odd forms. There is no distinguished divergence for the Lie algebroid structure on E , but there is a distinguished subset of divergences which we may obtain in a classical way. Firstly, suppose that the line bundle $\bigwedge^{\text{top}} E^*$ is trivializable. So we can choose a vector volume, i.e., a nowhere vanishing section $\mu \in \text{Sec}(\bigwedge^{\text{top}} E^*)$. Then the formula

$$(9) \quad \mathcal{L}_X \mu = \text{div}_\mu(X)\mu, \quad \text{where } X \in \text{Sec}(E)$$

defines a divergence div_μ . We observe that $\text{div}_{-\mu} = \text{div}_\mu$. Thus for the non-orientable case we look for sections of a bundle over M which locally consists of non-ordered pairs $\{\mu_\alpha, -\mu_\alpha\}$ for an open cover $M = \bigcup_\alpha U_\alpha$ such that the sets $\{\mu_\alpha, -\mu_\alpha\}$ and $\{\mu_\beta, -\mu_\beta\}$ coincide when restricted to $U_\alpha \cap U_\beta$. The fundamental observation is that such global sections always exist and define global divergences. This is because they can be viewed as sections of the bundle $|\text{Vol}|_E = (\bigwedge^{\text{top}} E^*)_0 / \mathbb{Z}_2$, where $(\bigwedge^{\text{top}} E^*)_0$ is the bundle $\bigwedge^{\text{top}} E^*$ with the zero section removed and divided by the obvious \mathbb{Z}_2 -action of passing to the opposite vector. The bundle $|\text{Vol}|_E$ is an 1-dimensional affine bundle modelled on the vector bundle $M \times \mathbb{R}$, and also a principal \mathbb{R} bundle where $t \in \mathbb{R}$ acts by scalar multiplication with e^t . Since it has a contractible fiber, sections always exist. Note that sections $|\mu|$ of $|\text{Vol}|_E$ are particular cases of odd forms, [2]: Let $p : \tilde{M} \rightarrow M$ be the two-fold covering of M on which p^*E is oriented, namely the set of vectors of length 1 in the line bundle over M with cocycle of transition functions $\text{sign det}(\phi_{\alpha\beta})$, where $\phi_{\alpha\beta} : U_\alpha \cap U_\beta \rightarrow GL(V)$ is the cocycle of transition functions for the vector bundle E . Then the odd forms are those forms on p^*E which are in the -1 eigenspace of the natural vector bundle isomorphism which covers the decktransformation of \tilde{M} . So odd forms are certain sections of a line bundle over a two-fold covering of the base manifold M . This is related but complementary to the construction of the line bundle (over M) of densities which involve the cocycle of transition functions $|\det(\phi_{\alpha\beta})|$. For example, any Riemannian metric g on the vector bundle E induces an odd volume form $|\mu|_g \in \text{Sec}(|\text{Vol}|_E) \simeq \text{Sec}(|\text{Vol}|_{E^*})$ which locally is represented by the wedge product of any orthonormal basis of local sections of E (thus E^*). Note that such product is independent on the choice of the basis modulo sign, so our odd volume is well defined.

For the definition of a divergence $\text{div}_{|\mu|}$ associated to $|\mu| \in \text{Sec}(|\text{Vol}|_E)$ we will write simply

$$(10) \quad \mathcal{L}_X |\mu| = \text{div}_{|\mu|}(X) |\mu| \quad \text{for } X \in \text{Sec}(E).$$

Note that the distinguished set $\text{Div}_0(E)$ of divergences obtained in this way from sections of $|\text{Vol}|_E$ corresponds (in the sense of (6)) to the set of those flat connections on $\bigwedge^{\text{top}} E^*$ whose holonomy group equals \mathbb{Z}_2 : Associate the horizontal leaf $|\mu|$ to such a connection, and note that a positive multiple of $|\mu|$ gives rise to the same divergence.

In the case of a vector bundle Riemannian metric g on E a natural question arises about the relation between the divergence $\text{div}_{|\mu|_g}$ associated with the odd volume $|\mu|_g$ induced by the metric g and the divergence div_{∇_g} induced by the flat Levi-Civita connection ∇_g on $\bigwedge^{\text{top}} E^* \simeq \bigwedge^{\text{top}} E$.

Theorem 3.2. *For any vector bundle Riemannian metric g on E*

$$\text{div}_{|\mu|_g} = \text{div}_{\nabla_g}.$$

Proof. Let X_1, \dots, X_n be an orthonormal basis of local sections of E and $\alpha^k = g(X_k, \cdot)$ be the dual basis of local sections of E^* , so that $|\mu|_g$ is locally

represented by $\alpha_1 \wedge \dots \wedge \alpha^n$. For any local section X of E

$$\begin{aligned} \operatorname{div}_{|\mu|_g}(X) &= -\langle \mathcal{L}_X(\alpha^1 \wedge \dots \wedge \alpha^n), X_1 \wedge \dots \wedge X_n \rangle = \\ &= \langle \alpha^1 \wedge \dots \wedge \alpha^n, \mathcal{L}_X(X_1 \wedge \dots \wedge X_n) \rangle = \sum_k \langle \alpha^k, [X, X_k] \rangle = \\ &= \sum_k \langle \alpha^k, \nabla_X X_k - \nabla_{X_k} X \rangle = \sum_k g(X_k, \nabla_X X_k) - \sum_k i(\alpha^k) \nabla_{X_k} X. \end{aligned}$$

But $-\sum_k i(\alpha^k) \nabla_{X_k} X = \operatorname{div}_{\nabla_g}(X)$ and

$$2 \sum_k g(X_k, \nabla_X X_k) = \sum_k \rho(X) g(X_k, X_k) - \sum_k \nabla_X(g)(X_k, X_k) = 0,$$

where $\rho : E \rightarrow TM$ is the anchor of the Lie algebroid on E , since ∇ is Levi-Civita ($\nabla g = 0$). \square

3.3. The generating operator for an odd form. The corresponding generating operator $\partial_{|\mu|}$ for the divergence of a non-vanishing odd form $|\mu|$ can be defined explicitly by

$$\mathcal{L}_a |\mu| = -i(\partial_{|\mu|}(a)) |\mu|,$$

where $\mathcal{L}_a = i_a d - (-1)^{|a|} d i_a$ is the Lie differential associated with $a \in \mathcal{A}^{|a|}(E)$ so that

$$(11) \quad i(\partial_{|\mu|}(a)) |\mu| = (-1)^{|a|} d i_a |\mu|.$$

In other words, locally over U we have

$$(12) \quad \partial_{|\mu|}(a) = (-1)^{|a|} *_\mu^{-1} d *_\mu(a)$$

where $*_\mu$ is the isomorphism of $\mathcal{A}(E)|_U$ and $\mathcal{A}(E^*)|_U$ given by $*_\mu(a) = i_a \mu$, for a representative μ of $|\mu|$. Note that the right hand side of (12) depends only on $|\mu|$ and not on the choice of the representative since $*_\mu d *_\mu = *_{-\mu} d *__{-\mu}$. Formula (12) gives immediately $\partial_{|\mu|}^2 = 0$, which also follows from the remark on flat connections above. So $\partial_{|\mu|}$ is a homology operator.

Moreover, it is also a generating operator. Namely, using standard calculus of Lie derivatives we get

$$\mathcal{L}_{a \wedge b} = i_b \mathcal{L}_a - (-1)^{|a|} i_{[a,b]} + (-1)^{|a|+|b|} i_a \mathcal{L}_b$$

which can be rewritten in the form

$$(13) \quad i_{[a,b]} = (-1)^{|a|} \left(-\mathcal{L}_{a \wedge b} + i_b \mathcal{L}_a + (-1)^{|a|+|b|+1} i_a \mathcal{L}_b \right)$$

When we apply (13) to $|\mu|$ we get

$$i_{[a,b]} |\mu| = (-1)^{|a|} \left(i(\partial_{|\mu|}(a \wedge b)) - i(\partial_{|\mu|}(a) \wedge b) - (-1)^{|a|} i(a \wedge \partial_{|\mu|}(b)) \right) |\mu|$$

which proves (2). Thus we get:

Theorem 3.4. *For any $|\mu| \in \operatorname{Sec}(|\operatorname{Vol}|_E)$ the formula*

$$(14) \quad \mathcal{L}_a |\mu| = -i(\partial_{|\mu|}(a)) |\mu|$$

defines uniquely a generating operator $\partial_{|\mu|} \in \operatorname{Gen}(E)$.

We remark that formula (14) in the case of trivializable $\bigwedge^{\text{top}} E^*$ has been already found in [11]. In this sense the formula is well known. What is stated in Theorem 3.4 is that (14) serves in general, as if the bundle $\bigwedge^{\text{top}} E^*$ were trivial, if we replace ordinary forms with odd volume forms.

3.5. Homology of the Lie algebroid. The homology operator of the form $\partial_{|\mu|}$ will be called the homology operator for the Lie algebroid E . The crucial point is that they all define the same homology. This is due to the fact that $\partial_{|\mu_1|}$ and $\partial_{|\mu_2|}$ differ by contraction with an exact 1-form.

In general, two divergences differ by contraction with a closed 1-form. Indeed, $(\text{div}_1 - \text{div}_2)(fX) = f(\text{div}_1 - \text{div}_2)(X)$, so $(\text{div}_1 - \text{div}_2)(X) = i_\phi X$ for a unique 1-form ϕ . Moreover, (5) implies that $i_\phi[X, Y] = [i_\phi X, Y] + [X, i_\phi Y]$, so ϕ is closed. Since both sides are derivations we have

$$(15) \quad \partial_{\text{div}_2} - \partial_{\text{div}_1} = i_\phi.$$

But for any $|\mu_1|, |\mu_2| \in \text{Sec}(|\text{Vol}|_E)$ there exists a positive function $F = e^f$ such that $|\mu_2| = F |\mu_1|$. Then $\mathcal{L}_X |\mu_2| = \mathcal{L}_X(F |\mu_1|) = \mathcal{L}_X(F) |\mu_1| + F \mathcal{L}_X(|\mu_1|)$ so that $\text{div}_{|\mu_2|}(X) |\mu_2| = \mathcal{L}_X(f) |\mu_2| + \text{div}_{|\mu_1|}(X) |\mu_2|$, i.e., $\text{div}_{|\mu_2|} - \text{div}_{|\mu_1|} = i(df)$.

To see that the homology of $\partial_{|\mu_1|}$ and $\partial_{|\mu_2|}$ are the same, note first that $\partial_{|\mu_2|} = \partial_{|\mu_1|} a + i_{df} a$. And then let us gauge $\mathcal{A}(E)$ by multiplication with $F = e^f$. This is an isomorphism of graded vector spaces and we have

$$e^f \partial_{|\mu_1|} e^{-f} a = \partial_{|\mu_1|} a + i_{df} a = \partial_{|\mu_2|} a,$$

so $\partial_{|\mu_1|}$ and $\partial_{|\mu_2|}$ are graded conjugate operators.

This is just the dual picture of the well-known gauging of the de Rham differential by Witten [19], see also [7] for consequences in the theory of Lie algebroids. Thus we have proved (cf. [11, p.120]):

Theorem 3.6. *All homology operators for a Lie algebroid generate the the same homology: $H_*(E, \partial_{|\mu_1|}) = H_*(E, \partial_{|\mu_2|})$. In the case of trivializable $\bigwedge^{\text{top}} E^*$, (12) gives Poincaré duality $H^*(E, d) \cong H_{\text{top}-*}(E, \partial_{|\mu|})$.*

3.7. Remark. We got a well-defined Lie algebroid homology, in contrast with the standard approach when all generating operators are admitted. It is clear that adding a term i_ϕ with ϕ a closed 1-form which is not exact, as in (15), will probably change the homology. But this could be understood as an a priori deformation like in the case of the deformed de Rham differential of Witten [19]:

$$(16) \quad d^\phi \eta = d\eta + \phi \wedge \eta.$$

Indeed, $i(i_\phi a)\mu = -(-1)^{|a|} \phi \wedge i_a \mu$ implies $*_\mu i_\phi(a) = -(-1)^{|a|} e_\phi *_\mu(a)$ where $e_\phi \eta = \phi \wedge \eta$. Thus we get $(-1)^{|a|} *_\mu^{-1} (d + e_\phi) *_\mu(a) = (\partial_{|\mu|} - i_\phi)(a)$, so, at least in the the trivializable case, there is the Poincaré duality

$$H^*(E, d + e_\phi) \cong H_{\text{top}-*}(E, \partial_\mu - i_\phi).$$

Note that the differentials d^ϕ appear as part of the Cartan differential calculus for Jacobi algebroids, see [10], [6], [7], so that there is a relation between generating operators for a Lie algebroid and the Jacobi algebroid structures associated with it.

4. MODULAR CLASSES

4.1. The modular class of a morphism. As we have shown, every Lie algebroid E has a distinguished class $\text{Div}_0(E)$ of divergences obtained from sections of $|\text{Vol}|_E$. Such divergences differ by contraction with an exact 1-form. Let now $\kappa : E_1 \rightarrow E_2$ be a morphism of Lie algebroids.

There is the induced map $\kappa^* : \text{Div}(E_2) \rightarrow \text{Div}(E_1)$ defined by $\kappa^*(\text{div}_2)(X_1) = \text{div}_2(\kappa(X_1))$. The fact that κ^* maps divergences into divergences follows from $\kappa(fX) = f\kappa(X)$ and the fact that the Lie algebroid morphism respects the anchors, $\rho_1 = \rho_2 \circ \kappa$. The space $\kappa^*(\text{Div}_0(E_2)) \subset \text{Div}(E_1)$ consists of divergences which differ by insertion of an exact 1-form. Therefore, the cohomology class of the 1-form ϕ which is defined by the equation

$$(17) \quad \kappa^*(\text{div}_{E_2}) - \text{div}_{E_1} = i_\phi, \quad \text{for } \text{div}_{E_i} \in \text{Div}_0(E_i), i = 1, 2,$$

does not depend on the choice of div_{E_1} and div_{E_2} . We will call it the *modular class* of κ and denote it by $\text{Mod}(\kappa)$. Thus we have:

Theorem 4.2. *For every Lie algebroid morphism*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} E_1 & \xrightarrow{\kappa} & E_2 \\ & \searrow \tau_1 & \swarrow \tau_2 \\ & M & \end{array}$$

the cohomology class $\text{Mod}(\kappa) = [\phi] \in H^1(E_1, d_{E_1})$ defined by ϕ in (17) is well defined independently of the choice of $\text{div}_{E_1} \in \text{Div}_0(E_1)$ and $\text{div}_{E_2} \in \text{Div}_0(E_2)$. \square

4.3. The modular class of a Lie algebroid. In the case when the morphism $\kappa = \rho : E \rightarrow TM$ is the anchor map of a Lie algebroid E , the modular class $\text{Mod}(\rho)$ is called the *modular class of the Lie algebroid E* and it is denoted by $\text{Mod}(E)$. The idea that the modular class is associated with the difference between the Lie derivative action on $\bigwedge^{\text{top}}(E^*)$ and on $\bigwedge^{\text{top}} T^*M$ via the anchor map is, in fact, already present in [3]. Also the interpretation of the modular class as certain secondary characteristic class of a Lie algebroid, present in [4], is a quite similar. In [4] the trace of the difference of some connections is used instead of the difference of two divergences. We have

Theorem 4.4. *$\text{Mod}(E)$ is the modular class Θ_E in the sense of [3].*

Proof. The modular class Θ_E in the sense of [3] is defined as the class $[\phi]$ where ϕ is given by

$$(18) \quad \mathcal{L}_X(a) \otimes \mu + a \otimes \mathcal{L}_{\rho(X)}\mu = \langle X, \phi \rangle a \otimes \mu$$

for all sections a of $\bigwedge^{\text{top}}(E)$ and μ of $\bigwedge^{\text{top}}(T^*M)$, respectively. Let us take $|a^*| \in \text{Sec}(|\text{Vol}|_E)$ and $|\mu| \in \text{Sec}(|\text{Vol}|_{TM})$, locally represented by $a^* \in \text{Sec}(\bigwedge^{\text{top}}(E^*|_U))$ and $\mu \in \text{Sec}(\bigwedge^{\text{top}}(T^*M|_U))$. Let a be a local section of $\bigwedge^{\text{top}} E$ dual to a^* . Then $\mathcal{L}_X(a) = -\text{div}_{|a^*|}(X)a$ and $\mathcal{L}_X(\mu) = \rho^*(\text{div}_{|\mu|})(X)\mu$ so that (18) yields $i_\phi = \rho^*(\text{div}_{|\mu|}) - \text{div}_{|a^*|}$. \square

Note that in our approach the modular class $\text{Mod}(TM)$ of the canonical Lie algebroid TM is trivial by definition. It is easy to see that the modular class of a base preserving morphism can be expressed in terms of the modular classes of the corresponding Lie algebroids.

Theorem 4.5. *For a base preserving morphism $\kappa : E_1 \rightarrow E_2$ of Lie algebroids*

$$\text{Mod}(\kappa) = \text{Mod}(E_1) - \kappa^*(\text{Mod}(E_2)).$$

Proof. Let $\rho_l : E_l \rightarrow TM$ be the anchor of E_l , $l = 1, 2$. Take $\text{div}_{E_l} \in \text{Div}_0(E_l)$, $l = 1, 2$, and $\text{div}_{TM} \in \text{Div}_0(TM)$. Since $\text{Mod}(E_l)$ is represented by η_l , $i_{\eta_l} = \text{div}_{E_l} - \rho_l^*(\text{div}_{TM})$ and $\rho_1 = \rho_2 \circ \kappa$, we can write

$$\begin{aligned} i_{\eta_1} &= \text{div}_{E_1} - \rho_1^*(\text{div}_{TM}) = \\ &= \text{div}_{E_1} - \kappa^*(\text{div}_{E_2}) + \kappa^*(\text{div}_{E_2} - \rho_2^*(\text{div}_{TM})) = i_{\eta_\kappa} + i_{\kappa^*(\eta_2)}, \end{aligned}$$

where η_κ represents $\text{Mod}(\kappa)$. Thus $\eta_1 = \eta_\kappa + \eta_2$. \square

4.6. The universal Lie algebroid. For any vector bundle $\tau : E \rightarrow M$ there exists a universal Lie algebroid $\text{QD}(E)$ whose sections are the quasi-derivations on E , i.e., mappings $D : \text{Sec}(E) \rightarrow \text{Sec}(E)$ such that $D(fX) = fD(X) + \hat{D}(f)X$ for $f \in C^\infty(M)$ and $X \in \text{Sec}(E)$, where \hat{D} is a vector field on M ; see the survey article [5]. Quasi-derivations are known in the literature under various names: covariant differential operators [15], module derivations [16], derivative endomorphisms [12], etc. The Lie algebroid $\text{QD}(E)$ can be described as the Atiyah algebroid associated with the principal $GL(n, \mathbb{R})$ -bundle $\text{Fr}(E)$ of frames in E , and quasi-derivations can be identified with the $GL(n, \mathbb{R})$ -invariant vector fields on $\text{Fr}(E)$. The corresponding short exact Atiyah sequence in this case is

$$0 \rightarrow \text{End}(E) \rightarrow \text{QD}(E) \rightarrow TM \rightarrow 0.$$

This observation shows that there is a modular class associated to every vector bundle E , namely the modular class $\text{Mod}(\text{QD}(E))$, which is a vector bundle invariant.

It is also obvious that, viewing a flat E_0 -connection (representation) in a vector bundle E over M for a Lie algebroid E_0 over M as a Lie algebroid morphism $\nabla : E_0 \rightarrow \text{QD}(E)$, one can define the modular class $\text{Mod}(\nabla)$.

Question. *How is $\text{Mod}(\text{QD}(E))$ related to other invariants of E (e.g. characteristic classes)?*

4.7. Remark. One can interpret the modular class $\text{Mod}(E)$ of the Lie algebroid E as a "trace" of the adjoint representation. Indeed, if we fix local coordinates u^a on $U \subset M$ a local frame X_i of local sections of E over U , and the dual frame α^i of E^* , then the Lie algebroid structure is encoded in the "structure functions"

$$[X_i, X_j] = \sum_k c_{ij}^k X_k, \quad \rho(X_i) = \sum_a \rho_i^a \partial_{u^a}.$$

Proposition. *The modular class $\text{Mod}(E)$ is locally represented by the closed 1-form*

$$(19) \quad \phi = \sum_i \left(\sum_k c_{ik}^k + \sum_a \frac{\partial \rho_i^a}{\partial u^a} \right) \alpha^i.$$

Proof. We insert into (18) the elements $a = X_1 \wedge \cdots \wedge X_n$ and $\mu = du^1 \wedge \cdots \wedge du^m$. Since

$$\mathcal{L}_{X_i} a = \sum_k c_{ik}^k a \quad \text{and} \quad \mathcal{L}_{X_i} \mu = \sum_a \frac{\partial \rho_i^a}{\partial u^a} \mu,$$

we get

$$\langle X_i, \phi \rangle a \otimes \mu = \left(\sum_k c_{ik}^k + \sum_a \frac{\partial \rho_i^a}{\partial u^a} \right) a \otimes \mu. \quad \square$$

One could say that representing cohomology locally does not make much sense, e.g. the modular class $\text{Mod}(TM)$ is trivial so locally trivial. However, remember that for a general Lie algebroid the Poincaré lemma does not hold: closed forms need not be locally exact. In particular, for a Lie algebra (with structure constants), (19) says that the modular class is just the trace of the adjoint representation. In any case, (19) gives us a closed form, which is not obvious on first sight. If E is a trivial bundle, (19) gives us a globally defined modular class in local coordinates.

4.8. Remark. As we have already mentioned, the modular class of a Lie algebroid is the first characteristic class of R. L. Fernandes [4]. There are also higher classes, shown in [1] to be characteristic classes of the anchor map, interpreted as a representation "up to homotopy". It is interesting if our idea can be adapted to describe these higher characteristic classes as well.

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